

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 3/11/2021

### "Sisters of St. Francis"

The Sylvania based Sisters of St. Francis are celebrating their 105 years of mission and ministry since their founding in 1916. Their presence in Sylvania is a great treasure and resource for our residents and our quality of life. To the Sisters of St. Francis – thank you for all you do and congratulations for 105 years of service and vision!

The 114 Sisters of St. Francis work in a variety of ministries in seven states including education, healthcare, pastoral work, social work, environmental stewardship, and social justice.

The Sisters sponsor Lourdes University, which offers graduate and undergraduate degree programs, and brings to Sylvania all the programming and resources of higher education. They have partnered with Sylvania Schools to improve Northview Cat Stadium and opened a campus recreation center bringing collegiate level athletic competition to Sylvania.

Also in the Sylvania area, the Sisters have founded and continue to sponsor Bethany House, Sophia Center, Rosary Care Center, Our Lady of Grace Hall assisted living, Convent Park senior apartments, the Franciscan Center and Appold Planetarium. The Sisters and their programs in Sylvania have greatly impacted and enriched many of our lives.

The Sisters of St. Francis began on December 8, 1916, when Mother Adelaide Sandusky, along with twenty-two other Sisters, responded to a call from Toledo Bishop Joseph Schrembs to come to Ohio from Rochester, Minnesota and educate the children of Polish immigrants. Over the years, they taught in numerous Catholic grade schools in northwest Ohio and at Toledo Central Catholic High School. I am sure there are many here in Sylvania who had them once as teachers.

My own memories of the Sisters of St. Francis began while in high school with views along Convent Blvd. and from Sylvania High School into their campus, which in the 1960's was private and a mystery to me and my fellow students. But over the years, starting with the Franciscan Center, the beauty, resources and treasures of their campus have been opened up to the public and shared with us.

When I was younger, I would occasionally see Sisters dressed in their traditional habits around Sylvania. Sister Sheila Shea, as director of the Franciscan Center, was the first Sister I came to know and became a good friend as she joined to help with several Sylvania committees and commissions. Today I am truly fortunate to know and count as friends many of these unique and talented women who constantly work for a better life for all.

The Sisters are celebrating their 105 years starting during Catholic Sisters Week this March. On Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> they unveiled and blessed a statue of their founderess, Mother Mary Adelaide Sandusky.

On behalf of the Citizens of Sylvania, congratulations and thank you to the Sisters of St. Francis for all you have brought and continue to bring to our community. You enrich our lives and broaden our horizons. Best wishes always as you celebrate 105 years of service!

